

# **GILA NATIONAL FOREST**



# **NEWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gila National Forest to Conduct Prescribed Fires**

(Silver City, NM – April 3, 2006) - Fire Managers on the Wilderness Ranger District will begin ignitions on the McKnight prescribed fire project on Tuesday around noon. Plans are to treat the McKnight and adjacent site, known as Little McKnight, prescribed fire projects over the next three days. The project sites are located about three miles northeast of the Wilderness Ranger Station in the Mimbres Valley. The combined projects total about 7,000 acres in which fire managers plan to treat mostly piñon juniper vegetation. Some eradication of this species is necessary for a successful prescribed burn, which means that there may be some pockets of moderate to high fire behavior during the ignitions. Managers have carefully planned out their needs for assigned resources, in some cases, doubling the number of individuals and equipment to ensure that there will be minimum chances for escape.

Prescribed fire resources and activities will then move to the Silver City Ranger District's Silverdale/Wildhorse Prescribed Fire project in the Burro Mountains, about 15 miles west of Silver City. Plans are in place to treat about 4,500 acres which will result in watershed and wildlife habitat improvement and help to reduce overgrown fuels, especially piñon juniper. This project is also expected to be completed within three days, with current plans to begin ignitions on April 10.

Prescriptions that outline the parameters, including weather, fuel conditions, assigned resources, smoke dispersal, and contingency plans, are uniquely designed for each project and identified in the individual "burn plans." On the day of ignition, if conditions are not within the predefined "parameters," then the ignitions will be postponed. Anytime during the project, fire managers are able to cease ignition operations, if they feel that they are not achieving the objectives of the prescription or if safety issues arise. The primary objective of all wildland fire activities, including prescribed fire, is always firefighter and public safety.

A public meeting is scheduled at the Flying A Fire Station on Saturday, April 8 at 6:00 pm, to inform Oak Grove Subdivision residents of the schedule for planned ignitions that will be taking place on the Silverdale/Wildhorse project, beginning on April 10. Directions to the Flying A Fire Station:

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from Silver City, travel west (towards Cliff, NM) on Highway 180 for 13 miles; turn left onto Mangus Valley Road; then turn right onto the Redrock Road and travel 3.5 miles to the fire station.

For general information regarding fire activity on the Gila National Forest, please contact the fire information officer at 505-388-8245 or 505-536-2250, or visit the website: [www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila).

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